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ABSTRACT

The ACT Student Opinion Survey (ACTSOS) was administered during spring 2000 to 42 randomly selected classes at South Texas Community College (STCC) and to a national sample of 30,326 students drawn from 130 public colleges. Compared with the national sample, students in the STCC sample: (1) generally were more satisfied with their college experience; (2) differed significantly in terms of their ethnic composition; (2) used more financial aid services, computer services and college sponsored services; (3) reported lower use of the library/learning resources center facilities and services; and (4) were less satisfied with academic advising/course planning, admissions and registration, facilities, and the attitude of non-teaching staff toward students. Some of these differences may be accounted for by STCC's larger proportion of part-time students compared to the national sample. STCC sample students were also given a 33 item follow up survey, and additional information was drawn from a mail survey form of the ACTSOS sent to non-returning students. Findings included: (1) part-time students (and non-returning students) reported lower levels of service use and satisfaction than full-time students; and (2) students generally were satisfied with instructional quality. (PGS)

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Findings From the Spring 2000 ACT Student Opinion Survey at South Texas Community College

ED 448 833

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Executive Summary

This report details the findings from the ACT Student Opinion Survey (ACTSOS) administered during Spring Semester 2000. Results from this survey – which provides the ability to compare the characteristics and opinions of STCC's students to those of a national sample of public college students who completed the same survey – were compiled with data from the Student Information System and student responses on the locally produced "Self-Study Follow-up Survey: Students" to produce a detailed picture of student needs, opinions and satisfaction with STCC. Additional information was also drawn from a mail survey form of the ACTSOS sent to non-returning students (A complete report on the findings from that study included as Appendix II.)

General Satisfaction with STCC

Although STCC is not the first choice of most students, the satisfaction item "This college in general" was given the third highest average satisfaction score by the STCC Sample, and approximately 44% of STCC's students would definitely (80% definitely or probably) choose to attend STCC again if they could start college over (a much higher percentage than in the Public College Sample.) This trend toward a global positive evaluation can be found on other items (such as that concerning the general appearance of the campus and grounds,) but it should not lead to complacency. In the student's eyes, STCC's strengths appear to be outweighing its problems, but the ACTSOS indicates that the school must improve in some areas, if this high level of general satisfaction is to be maintained.

Satisfaction with Instruction

STCC's greatest strength lies in its instruction, which received more positive ratings than any other area. This strength was demonstrated by:

- Scores for all of the items dealing with academic preparation fall in the top half of the rank distribution or average satisfaction scores.
- The STCC Sample gave the highest average satisfaction score to "Attitude of teaching staff towards students."
- Approximately 97% of the students in the STCC Sample felt the overall quality of education at STCC was average or better. 82% rated it good or excellent.
- More than 90% of the students feel STCC students are "Adequately" or "Very Well" prepared for transferring to a 4-year college or for entering the work force.

Satisfaction with Non-instructional Aspects of STCC

The Importance of Part-time Students

Part-time students are very important to STCC. Approximately 54% of the students attending STCC during Spring Semester 2000 were part-time students, and this student group includes most of the college's evening and weekend students. It is disturbing therefore to find significantly lower levels of service use and satisfaction for part-time as compared to full-time students. Yet these differences are such that the results reported by full-time and part-time students easily could represent two different schools.

Although some of the major differences in use and satisfaction are highlighted below, it should also be noted that many of the findings concerning part-time students match those found for non-returning students. This makes it imperative for each department to ensure that it provides equal services to all students, including part-time, evening and weekend students.

Financial Aid

Financial aid is extremely important to the students at STCC. Over 73% of the students in the STCC Sample and over 83% of the full-time students in the sample reported receiving financial aid. The satisfaction item "Availability of financial aid" was given the fifth highest average satisfaction score, and it was the only item in the Admissions and Registration Section that the STCC Sample rated significantly higher than the Public College Sample. Financial Services was also given the highest satisfaction rating of any of the 17 covered services by students who had used the service. Clearly financial aid is another of STCC's strengths, and anything that interferes with it could be extremely harmful.

That makes it extremely important for the Financial Aid Office to review its procedures to ensure that excellent service is available to part-time, evening and weekend students. Unfortunately, as was seen for many service areas, that does not currently appear to be the case.

- Significantly fewer part-time students have used financial aid (66% as compared to 87%)
- Significantly fewer part-time students report receiving financial aid (56% as compared to 84%)
- Part-time students gave "Availability of financial aid information prior to enrollment" a significantly lower average satisfaction score than did full-time students.
- Part-time students who had used the service gave financial aid services a significantly lower average satisfaction score than did full-time students

Advising

On the ACTSOS, STCC Students who had used the service gave "Academic Advising/Course Planning a significantly lower average satisfaction score than did the Public College Sample, and STCC students rated "Availability of your advisor" and "Value of the information provided by your advisor" significantly lower than did the Public College Sample. Here scores did not differ for full and part-time students, and it was difficult to be certain whether the responses related to Advising Center or faculty advisors.

The Self-Study Follow-up, which focused more on advising, provides some clarity. A preference for faculty advising is indicated when more than 90% of the students felt that any student with a major should be advised by a faculty member from their major program or department. Also, more students (46%) were "Satisfied" or "Very Satisfied"

with the accuracy of the guidance they received from their faculty advisor (compared to 23% for their Advising Center Advisor). Availability of advisors is an issue for both faculty and Advising Center Advisors; only slightly more than 50% of the students were satisfied or very satisfied with the availability of either. This area also shows evidence of less adequate service being available to part-time, evening and weekend students.

- Significantly fewer part-time students, compared to full-time students, had used Academic Advising/Course Planning Services.
- Advisement Center Hours were significantly less convenient for weekend and night students.
- Both the availability and accuracy of both faculty and Advisement Center Advisors was significantly lower for weekend and evening students.

Admissions and Registration

For 8 of the 9 satisfaction items dealing with Admission and Registration the average satisfaction score for STCC students fell below that of the Public College Sample, and the differences were significant for 6 of these 8 items. When looking at the average scores the differences may not seem large, even if significant, but the consistency of the responses marks Admissions and Registration as two areas where more improvement is needed.

Use of Services

A smaller proportion of part-time students, compared to full-time students, reported using 15 of the 17 services listed on the ACTSOS, and the difference was statistically significant for 7 of these services. Since most evening and weekend students are part-time students, this indicates that all departments need to review their procedures to ensure that adequate services are available to part-time evening and weekend students.

Data on use of service also indicates that fewer STCC students (as compared to the Public College Sample) are participating in college sponsored social activities and such other extracurricular activities as intramural sports and cultural programs. A greater emphasis on such activities, often credited with increasing the students' social integration with the college, could help improve retention.

Facilities

Facilities must be considered another area of mild but consistent student dissatisfaction. The average satisfaction scores for the STCC Sample fell below that of the Public College Sample on all 9 items in this area and significantly below on 6 of the 9 items. Some of this dissatisfaction may be alleviated by the recent addition of the new Mid-Valley and Nursing and Allied Health Facilities. However, since the "General condition and appearance of the buildings and grounds" was the sixth highest item in overall satisfaction scores for STCC, it would seem that each type of facility should be reviewed to determine possible specific deficiencies.

"Business-training facilities/equipment (computers, typewriters, etc.)," was the only facilities item where a significant difference was found in the average satisfaction scores for full-time and part-time students. Accordingly, this indicates a need to review the facilities and equipment available for business students during weekend and evening hours.

The "Reputation Effect" and Customer Service

It is often noted that a bad reputation spreads more rapidly than a good one. This may explain why, for 16 of the 17 services covered on the ACTSOS, students who have not used the service gave the service a lower average satisfaction score than did students who have used the service. This "Reputation Effect" may be caused by less satisfied students telling more people than satisfied students. This is not to say that real problems do not exist. It does suggest that either poor service or students' perceptions of poor service may have similar long-term effects in discouraging students from using programs and services at STCC important for their collegiate success.

- The average satisfaction score for "Attitude of nonteaching staff toward students" was significantly lower for STCC compared to the Public College Sample.
- The average satisfaction score for "Attitude of nonteaching staff toward students" ranked 30Th out of 43 items.
- All departments that interact with students must increase their emphasis on professionalism and quality customer service.

Who Attends STCC, When, and Why

In addition to information on student satisfaction, the ACTSOS combined with information from the Student Information System provided useful information about student scheduling and attendance patterns, as well as about different subgroups at STCC.

The data on student scheduling and attendance preferences can be summed up in 5 principles that should be considered in class planning and scheduling:

1. Most students only take courses when they want them.
2. Weekdays are the most highly preferred times for both full and part-time students.
3. Weeknights are the second most preferred times.
4. Most night students are part-time students
5. Few current students prefer either evenings and weekends or just weekends.

Important information about student sub-groups include:

- Fewer STCC students, compared to the Public College Sample, have attended for one year and fewer have attended 4 or more years. Given STCC's growth pattern, this indicates an urgent need to attract new students.
- Part-time students tend to be older, to work more hours and are less likely than full-time students to enter directly from high school.
- Characteristics of the part-time student group point to the need to consider andragogical principles when designing courses and facilities to meet their needs.

- Most of STCC's students attend for one of three purposes – 1. Transfer to a 4-year college (43.5%), 2. Earn an Associate Degree (26.8%), and 3. Earn a certificate or a vocational/technical degree (13.1%).
- Approximately 40% of the students whose purpose is to earn an Associate Degree are working toward one in the Technology or Nursing and Allied Health Divisions.

The following table combines information on the characteristics of different groups of students that attend STCC, their reasons for attending and different aspects of STCC that are important to them. Understanding these differences may provide useful insights for scheduling, program planning and marketing targeted to these subgroups (suggestions for the use of this table can be found in the Target Groups Section of the full report.)

Group Characteristic	Transfer to 4-year college		Associate Degree		Vocational/ Technical/ Certificate		Other	
Percent of Sample	44%		26%		13%		16%	
Percent of Group Full-time*	Full-time = 65%		Full-time = 60%		Full-time = 80%		Full-time = 59%	
Percent of Group Part-time*	Part-time = 35%		Part-time = 40%		Part-time = 20%		Part-time = 41%	
Most Frequently Attend Weekdays	78.6%		66.2%		87.8%		73.1%	
Most Frequently Attend Weeknight	17.9%		33.1%		10.8%		19.4%	
Most Frequently Attend Weekends	3.4%		0.7%		1.4%		7.5%	
Most Important Factor In Selecting STCC**	Average	Rank	Average	Rank	Average	Rank	Average	Rank
Low Cost Of Attending	2.55	1	2.35	5	2.36	3	2.26	2
Convenient Location	2.34	2	2.41	3	2.32	5	2.38	1
Offered the Courses I wanted	2.34	3	2.59	1	2.70	1	2.24	3
Good Chance of Personal Success	2.13	4	2.49	2	2.55	2	2.12	4
Availability of Scholarship or Financial Aid	2.11	4	2.39	4	2.27	6	2.06	6
Could Work While Attending	2.04	6	2.29	6	2.15	7	2.12	5
Liked the Size of the College	1.91	7	2.17	7	1.99	9	1.83	8
Good Vocational or Academic Reputation	1.78	8	2.16	8	2.34	4	1.84	7
Liked the Social Atmosphere	1.76	9	1.93	9	2.01	8	1.71	9
Advice of Parents or Relatives	1.63	10	1.68	10	1.90	10	1.47	10
Advice of High School Personnel	1.39	11	1.47	11	1.46	11	1.32	11
Wanted to be with Friends	1.18	12	1.17	12	1.20	12	1.22	12

*Due to the over representation of full-time students in this sample these figures merely indicate a general likelihood that a student will tend to be full-time or part-time.

Averages scores are derived from a three point scale

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Introduction

Administered during Spring Semester 2000, the ACT Student Opinion Survey (ACTSOS) provides the ability to compare STCC students' characteristics and opinions to those of a national sample of public college students who completed the same survey. This report focuses on the statistically significant differences between important student groups at STCC and between STCC and the national sample of public colleges.

Survey Administration and the Sample Obtained

The Public College Sample of 30326 students, used as the main comparison group throughout this report, was drawn from 130 colleges throughout the United States. The ACT Evaluation Survey Service, which compiled the data and performed the statistical analysis, excluded student records from the Public College Sample to guarantee that no individual institution or university system was over-represented. However, this pooled data is not from a random or pre-selected sample, and no attempt was made to alter the sample to provide nationally "representative" information. Information of the type given for the Public College Sample is often referred to as "user norms," since it simply represents a composite of the data obtained from other users of this survey.

At STCC, the ACTSOS was administered by instructors during 42 classes that had been selected using a stratified random sample design to provide a representative sample of students. Student absences and other administration problems resulted in a 70% (n=695) response rate. This sample does not differ significantly on any background variable (such as ethnic group, class site location or time) from the pre-selected group, and the responses obtained can be considered reliable.

Analysis of data for this sample did reveal one significant difference between the STCC sample and STGC's student population – part-time students are under-represented. Despite this, because students were randomly selected for inclusion in the ACTSOS Survey the under-representation of part-time students has little impact on the reliability and validity of the significant differences observed between full-time and part-time students, or between the STCC sample and the Public College Sample.

Enrollment Status

Enrollment Status	STCC Sample Official Definition	STCC Sample Report	All Spring 2000 Students	Public College Sample
Full-time	64.6%	70.4%	45.9%*	70%
Part-time	35.45	29.4%	54.1%*	28.6%
Blank		3%		1.4%

*p .001

As shown in the table above, although enrollment status as reported by the STCC Sample is not significantly different from that reported by the Public College

Sample, it does differ significantly (p .001) from the official definitions of Full/Part-time Status and from STCC's overall enrollment. To improve accuracy, the full and part-time status groups used in subsequent analyses are based on official data, not the student's self-report on the ACTSOS.

More importantly, attention should be focused on the proportion of STCC's student population who attend part-time. As will be show in later analyses, responses for part-time students do differ significantly for many items from responses given by full-time students, and these differences need to be given careful consideration to ensure that STCC continues to attract and retain this important group of students.

Student body characteristics

Age

The ACT Evaluation Survey Service separated student ages into the three groups shown below and using the Chi-square test for significance found that STCC differed significantly (p .001) from the Public College Sample.

Age	STCC*	Public College Sample*
20 or under	42.4%	41.5%
21 to 22	15.8%	11.6%
23 or over	41.2%	45.9%

*p .001

When these age groups are further broken down to facilitate planning for program development, the distributions for full and part-time students are found to differ significantly (p .001) with more part -time students falling into the older age groups.

Age	STCC Sample	STCC Full-time Students*	STCC Part-time Students*	Public College Sample
20 or under	42.4%	50.5%	29.2%	41.5%
21 to 25	30.5%	26.7%	38.1%	21.4%
26 to 39	21.9%	18.4%	27.4%	24.9%
40 to 61	4%	3.9%	4.4%	10.8%
62 or over	6%	5%	9%	3%

*p .001

This age difference between the two groups may suggest that andragogical principles could be studied to design program schedules that are structured and marketed to meet the needs of older, part-time students.

Race/Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	STCC Sample*	Public College Sample*
Mexican American, Mexican Origin	67.6%	2.3%
Puerto Rican, Cuban, other Latino or Hispanic	20.1%	1.8%
Caucasian, white	3.3%	74.5%
Other	1.3%	16.2%
Prefer not to respond	.4%	1.4%
Blank	1.2%	1.5%

*p .001

Not surprisingly the ethnic composition of STCC differs significantly (p .001) from that of the Public College Sample, and this raises the issue of the applicability of comparisons to that sample. As was discussed above, the statistics provided for the Public College Sample are often called "user norms," and they can best be viewed as benchmarks to measure STCC against. Viewed in this way, the user norms from the Public College Sample are quite useful.

Gender

Gender	STCC Sample**	STCC All Spring 2000**	Public College Sample**
Male	45.5%	40.2%	38.8%
Female	54.4%	59.8%	61.2%

**p .01

Although the distribution of genders for full and part-time students does not differ significantly, the distribution for the STCC Sample is significantly different (p .01) from all STCC students enrolled Spring Semester 2000, and the distribution of that group differs significantly from that of the Public College Sample (p .01). The impact of these differences on the following analysis is apt to be minimal and does not change the usefulness of scores from the Public College Sample as benchmarks. The distribution of genders is not significantly different for full-and part-time students.

Marital Status

Marital Status	STCC	Public College Sample
Unmarried (single, divorced, widowed)	72.2%	70.1%
Married	24%	25.5%
Separated	2.2%	1.8%
Blank/Prefer not to Respond	1.6%	2.6%

Despite small differences, the distribution of marital status reported by students at STCC does not differ significantly from that reported by students in the public college sample, nor does the distribution for full-time students differ from that of part-time students.

Number of Dependent Children

Number of Dependent Children	STCC	Public College Sample
0	65.8%	66.4%
1	14%	13.7%
2	11.8%	11.5%
3 or more	7.7%	7.3%
Blank	9%	1.1%

No significant difference exists between the STCC Sample and the Public College Sample for the numbers of dependent children. Similarly full-time and part-time students at STCC do not differ on this variable.

Overall College Grade Point Average

Reported Grade Point Average	STCC*	Public College Sample*
A- to A	10.8%	23.7%
B to A-	21.8%	30.4%
B- to B	25.9%	22.8%
C to B-	18%	17.3%
C- to C	6.3%	4.7%
Below C	2.1%	1.1%

*p .001

Table derived from the ACTSOS Summary Report for STCC and the ACTSOS Normative Data Report, with the two lowest GPA groups combined due to low frequencies.

The distribution of Grade Point Averages for STCC students differs significantly (p .001) from that for the Public College Sample. Full and part -time students at STCC, however do not differ significantly on this variable. It must be noted that this item does not show any evidence of grade inflation at STCC

Purpose for Entering this 2-year College

Purpose	STCC*	Public College Sample*
No definite purpose in mind	2.2%	2.2%
To take a few courses for self-improvement	2.3%	2.8%
To take a few job-related or job-required courses	1.5%	3.3%
To take courses necessary for transferring to another 2-year college	7.1%	4%
To take courses necessary for transferring to a 4-year college or university	43.5%	35%
To complete a vocational/technical program	7.1%	9.1%
To obtain or maintain a certification	6.0%	4.5%
To obtain an Associate Degree	26.8%	34.4%
Other	3.5%	4.6%

*p .001

Table derived from the ACTSOS Summary Report for STCC and the ACTSOS Normative Data Report

The distribution of reasons given for attending STCC does differ significantly (p .001) from that found for the Public College Sample. Much of this difference is due to the higher proportion of STCC students whose purpose is transfer to

another 2 or 4-year college and the lower proportion whose purpose is to obtain an Associate Degree. Full-time and Part-time STCC students did not differ significantly on this item.

Purpose For Attending and STCC Division*

Purpose for Attending	Business and Math	Liberal Arts and Sciences	Nursing and Allied Health	Technology	STCC
Transfer to a 4-year College % of Purpose	11%	70.9%	13.9%	8%	
Transfer to a 4-year College % of Each Division	26.8%	63.9%	22.9%	17.9%	43.5%
Vocational, Technical, Certificate Program % of Purpose	5.2%	5.2%	58.4%	31.2%	
Vocational, Technical, Certificate Program % Each Division	4.1%	1.5%	31.3%	42.9%	13.10%
Earn Associate Degree % of Purpose	32.9%	27.2%	30.4%	9.5%	
Earn Associate Degree % Each Division	53.6%	16.3%	33.3%	26.8%	26.8%
Other % of Purpose	17%	47%	25.7%	10%	
Other % Each Division	15.5%	18.3%	12.5%	12.5%	16.6%

***Because the major codes on the ACTSOS do not exactly match STCC's programs, the categorization by division must be regarded as close approximations.**

Comparing the distribution of purposes by the division may provide some insight into prioritizing for scheduling purposes. In the Liberal Arts and Sciences Division, for example, it would seem that priority should be given to scheduling those classes most sought by transfer students. This table also indicates that approximately 40% of those students whose purpose in attending STCC is to obtain an Associate Degree are seeking those degrees in a technical area (programs in Technology or Nursing and Allied Health).

Number of Hours Per Week Currently Employed

Number of Hours Per Week Currently Employed	STCC Full-time*	STCC Part-time*	STCC Combined*	Public College Sample*
0 or Occasional Jobs	44.9%	22.5%	37.3%	27.1%
1 to 10	4.1%	7.5%	5.3%	7.1%
11 to 20	19.8%	9.7%	15.7%	16%
21 to 30	12.8%	16.7%	14.2%	17.2%
31 to 40	13.5%	28.2%	19%	18.9%
Over 40	3.6%	14.5%	7.3%	12.2%
Blank	1.2%	9%	1.2%	1.4%

*p .001

The distribution of hours worked by the complete sample of STCC Students differs significantly (p .001) from that for the Public College Sample and indicates that STCC students tend to work less than the Public College Sample. This, however, does not paint an accurate picture of the working behavior of STCC students.

For program planning, scheduling and marketing it is important to remember that approximately 54% of STCC's students attend part-time, and the distribution of hours worked reported by the part-time students in this sample varies significantly (p .001) from that reported by full -time students at STCC.

From this data, one may estimate that about 43% of STCC's part-time students work 31 or more hours per week and almost 60% of this group work 21 or more hours per week. To help these students plan and complete their educations, programs should be scheduled consistently and all needed classes should be offered both during day and evening hours.

Number of Years Attended

Years Attended*	STCC*	Public College Sample*
1 Year	49.6%	53.8%
2 Years	30.6%	25%
3 Years	11.1%	9.8%
4 or More Years	3%	6.4%
Blank	5.6%	5.1%

*p .001

Although there was no significant difference in the number of years attended between full and part-time students, the STCC Sample differed significantly (p .001) from the Public College Sample. Interestingly, STCC had fewer students at both ends of the distribution ("1 Year" and "4 or More Years"). The meaning of the lower number of students in the "4 or More Years" category is unclear, but this combined with the comparatively low figure for "1 Year" category almost certainly indicates a need for increased success in marketing STCC to new students.

Time of Classes Most Frequently Attended

Type of Classes Most Frequently Attended	STCC Full-time*	STCC Part-time*	STCC Combined*	Public College Sample*
Day Classes	84.1%	58.6%	75.4%	76.5%
Evening Classes	13.3%	32.2%	19.6%	20.6%
Weekend Classes	7%	4.4%	2%	3%
Other	7%	1.3%	1%	6%
Blank	1.2%	3.5%	2%	1.9%

*p .001

Although the difference in distribution for type of classes most frequently attended between the STCC Sample and the Public College Sample is not great, it is statistically significant (p .001). A greater significant (p .001) difference, one that may be more meaningful for planning and scheduling, is that between STCC's full-time and part-time students. This indicates that while more part-time students attend primarily day classes, they also constitute the largest group taking evening classes.

The table above also shows that few students, either part-time or full-time, take primarily weekend classes. Before discussing the implications of this data, it must be considered in conjunction with information about when students want classes.

Times Students Prefer Classes

To provide greater detail about student scheduling, the local supplement to the ACTSOS asked students to select the times they would like to attend classes. For 79% of the sample (552 students) responses to this item could be matched with both the student's response to the ACTSOS question "Which type of class do you most frequently attend" and to the student's Spring 2000 schedule. These results show that the majority of students attend classes only during their preferred times. During Spring Semester 2000, of the 2130 class sections attended by these 552 students, only 223 sections (10%) were taken outside the students' preferred times.

Time Blocks from Students schedules	Number of Sections		Sections Matching Preferred Times		Sections Not Matching Preferred Times	
	Sections	% Total	Sections	% Total	Sections	% Total
Weekdays	1639	77%	1572	74%	67	3%
Weeknights	386	17%	295	14%	91	4%
Weekends and Other	105	5%	40	2%	65	3%

Similarly, the times when students prefer to take classes closely matches the students' responses to ACTSOS survey question about when they most frequently attend classes.

Times Preferred	Most Frequent Time Matches Preferred*		Most Frequent Time Does Not Match Preferred*	
	Students	%Total	Students	%Total
Weekdays Only	239	43.3%	10	1.8%
Weekdays and Weeknights	176	31.9%	5	9%
Weeknights Only	38	6.9%	9	1.6%
Weekdays and Weekends	21	3.8%	0	0%
Weeknights and Weekends	22	4%	1	2%
Weekends only	3	5%	2	4%
Anytime	26	4.7%	0	0%
Total Students = 552	525	95%	27	5%

*Matched with Weekday, Weeknight, Weekend and Other categories from ACT SOS

This close match allows us to use the three categories from the ACTSOS as a reliable proxy for both student course taking behavior and course preference.

The data on student time preferences can be summed up in 5 principles that should be considered in class planning and scheduling:

6. Most students only take courses when they want them.
7. Weekdays are the most highly preferred times for both full and part-time students.
8. Weeknights are the second most preferred times.
9. Most night students are part-time students
10. Few current students prefer weekends or evenings and weekends.

Some of the implications for course planning and scheduling were discussed in the section "Number of Hours a Week Currently Employed." Even though most part-time students prefer days, to maximize the retention and graduation of those who do not, evening courses must be scheduled consistently so that all components of a program or course of study for transfer can be completed. Planning and publishing a schedule of these programs ahead of time would help part-time, evening students arrange their work times to facilitate completing their education and would help STCC by ensuring a reasonable class size.

The small number of current students who prefer weekends or evenings and weekends indicates that if STCC is to maximize the use of facilities on weekends, weekend programs should be self-contained (planned so that they can be completed on weekends only) and marketed to a different group of potential students.

Status Before Entering this College

Status Before Entering This College	STCC Full-time*	STCC Part-time*	STCC Combined*	Public College Sample*	
Entered from high school	41.5%	28.2%	36.8%	37.6%	
Entered after working (excluding summer only jobs)	26.1%	25.6%	25.9%	29.9%	
Transferred from another 2-year college	3.1%	3.1%	3.1%	4.5%	
Transferred from a 4-year college	17.9%	21.6%	19.4%	6.8%	
Entered after completing military service	1.4%	1.3%	1.4%	2.9%	
Other	9.4%	18.5%	12.8%	16.8%	
Blank	.5%	1.8%	.9%	1.6%	

*p .001

For this item students were asked to select from six statements the one that was true for them at the time they first entered STCC, and while the distribution of responses on this item for STCC as a whole differed significantly (p .001) from that of the Public College Sample, again, the more important difference (significant at p .001) may be between the responses for full and part -time students at STCC.

Part-time students are much less likely to have entered directly from high school. They are also more likely to choose "other" on this item or to have transferred from a 4-year college. As was mentioned under the discussion of student age, this points to the need to consider andragogical principles when designing courses and facilities to meet the needs of older, part-time students.

Travel Distance

Full and part-time students at STCC did not differ significantly on this item, but the distribution of distances traveled by STCC students does differ significantly (p .001) from that for the Public College Sample. Notably only 17.3% of the

STCC sample reported living 21 or more miles from the college as compared to 30.2% for the Public College Sample.

Distance Between College and Home	STCC*	Public College Sample*
Under 1 Mile	4.2%	6.5%
1 - 5 Miles	23.9%	21.8%
6 - 10 Miles	24.6%	18.1%
11 - 20 Miles	29.6%	22.3%
21 - 40 Miles	13.4%	19.6%
Over 40 Miles	3.9%	10.6%
Blank	4%	1.1%

*p .001

Financial Aid

Receiving Financial Aid	STCC Full-time*	STCC Part-time*	STCC Combined*	Public College Sample*
Yes	83.3%	55.5%	73.5%	55.1%
No	16.7%	43.6%	26.2%	43.8%
Blank		.9%	.3%	1.2%

*p .001

The receipt of financial aid is an extremely important factor affecting student attendance and retention at STCC. Here again we see significant differences (p .001) both between STCC's full and part -time students and between the STCC sample and the Public College Sample. On this item, STCC's part-time student group more closely resembles the Public College Sample, while a much larger proportion of STCC's full-time student group receives financial aid. The major point to be derived from this data is that every effort must be made to maintain and, if possible, increase the availability of financial aid services. Anything that reduces the effectiveness of the Financial Aid Office can have a dramatic impact on enrollment.

Reasons Students Attend STCC

On this item, students were asked to rate whether given a factor was "1 = Not A Reason," "2 = a Minor Reason," or "3= a Major Reason" for selecting a particular 2-year college. The table below lists the reasons for attending from the highest average score for the STCC Sample to the lowest. Average Scores are also shown for the full and part-time STCC students.

The table below shows that, based on chi-square tests, the distribution of responses for the STCC Sample differed significantly (p .01) from the Public College Sample on six items, and this may provide insight into aspects of STCC that can be used to market the college as a whole to all students. The three items on which full time students differed significantly (p .01 based both ch i-square and t-tests) from part-time students could also be used to target those students differentially. This method can be extended to provide insight into marketing the school to specific target groups.

Reason for Selecting This College	STCC	Public College Sample	STCC Full-time	STCC Part-time
Offered the Courses I wanted	2.43	2.46	2.47	2.36
Low Cost Of Attending	2.42	2.34	2.43	2.42
Convenient Location	2.35 **	2.40 **	2.35	2.39
Good Chance of Personal Success	2.28 **	2.14 **	2.36 **	2.12 **
Availability of Scholarship or Financial Aid	2.19	1.90	2.31 **	1.98 **
Could Work While Attending	2.13	2.18	2.05 **	2.28 **
Liked the Size of the College	1.97 **	1.82 **	2	1.94
Good Vocational or Academic Reputation	1.95	1.97	1.99	1.91
Liked the Social Atmosphere	1.82 **	1.54 **	1.88	1.74
Advice of Parents or Relatives	1.65 **	1.53 **	1.68	1.62
Advice of High School Personnel	1.40 **	1.28 **	1.41	1.42
Wanted to be with Friends	1.19	1.21	1.2	1.16

**p .01

Target Groups

Group Characteristic	Transfer to 4-year college		Associate Degree		Vocational/ Technical/ Certificate		Other	
Percent of Sample	44%		26%		13%		16%	
Percent of Group Full-time*	Full-time = 65%		Full-time = 60%		Full-time = 80%		Full-time = 59%	
Percent of Group Part-time*	Part-time = 35%		Part-time = 40%		Part-time = 20%		Part-time = 41%	
Most Frequently Attend Weekdays	78.6%		66.2%		87.8%		73.1%	
Most Frequently Attend Weeknight	17.9%		33.1%		10.8%		19.4%	
Most Frequently Attend Weekends	3.4%		0.7%		1.4%		7.5%	
Most Important Factor In Selecting STCC	Average	Rank	Average	Rank	Average	Rank	Average	Rank
Low Cost Of Attending	2.55	1	2.35	5	2.36	3	2.26	2
Convenient Location	2.34	2	2.41	3	2.32	5	2.38	1
Offered the Courses I wanted	2.34	3	2.59	1	2.70	1	2.24	3
Good Chance of Personal Success	2.13	4	2.49	2	2.55	2	2.12	4
Availability of Scholarship or Financial Aid	2.11	4	2.39	4	2.27	6	2.06	6
Could Work While Attending	2.04	6	2.29	6	2.15	7	2.12	5
Liked the Size of the College	1.91	7	2.17	7	1.99	9	1.83	8
Good Vocational or Academic Reputation	1.78	8	2.16	8	2.34	4	1.84	7
Liked the Social Atmosphere	1.76	9	1.93	9	2.01	8	1.71	9
Advice of Parents or Relatives	1.63	10	1.68	10	1.90	10	1.47	10
Advice of High School Personnel	1.39	11	1.47	11	1.46	11	1.32	11
Wanted to be with Friends	1.18	12	1.17	12	1.20	12	1.22	12

*Due to the over representation of full-time students in this sample these figures merely indicate a general likelihood that a student will tend to be full-time or part-time.

In the table above several background factors are grouped to provide insight into the values and behavior of different segments of STCC's student population. Understanding these groupings may prove useful in program development and scheduling. The different rankings of the "Reason for Selecting STCC," shown in the table above, could help in knowing what factors to stress in marketing efforts targeted to different groups of potential students.

For example, this chart suggests that attracting Vocational-Technical-Certificate Students will have the greatest likelihood of increasing the proportion of full-time, weekday students. The ranking for "Offered the courses I wanted," indicates that – in the long-run – increasing the variety of programs available in these areas will produce the greatest increase in numbers of these students. In the short-run, targeted marketing of existing vocational, technical, and certificate programs should stress the high probability of personal success and relatively low cost of attending these programs -- along with other information (e.g. pay and job market information) designed to convince the potential student that this is the course they want.

Overall College Impressions

Rating of College at Time of Admission

Rating of College at Time of Application	STCC*	Public College Sample*
First Choice	55.8%	70%
Second Choice	34.5%	18.8%
Third Choice	5.3%	4.5%
Fourth Choice or Lower	4.2%	3.9%
Blank	1%	2.8%

The STCC Sample differed significantly (p .001) from students in the Public College Sample on this item, and no significant difference was found between full and part-time students. This item shows that STCC was more likely to have been a student's second choice and less likely to have been a student's first choice. This can best be viewed as a measure of STCC's status relative to UT Pan American.

Would the Student Choose STCC Again?

If you could start college over, would you choose to attend this college?	STCC*	Public College Sample*
Definitely Yes	43.6%	36.3%
Probably Yes	36%	34.6%
Uncertain	13.4%	15.8%
Probably No	4.2%	7.1%
Definitely No	2.4%	4%
Blank	4%	2.1%

*p .001

The lack of a significant difference between full and part time STCC students on this item shows that the level of satisfaction with the overall STCC experience is about the same for the two groups. By comparing STCC students with the Public

College Sample, where the difference is significant at p .001, one can see that this level of satisfaction is relatively high.

For STCC to score significantly lower than the Public College Sample on the rating of the college at the time of application but higher than the Public College Sample on the question of whether the students would choose STCC again, demonstrates that experience with STCC has a positive effect on student attitudes about the school.

Overall Impression of Quality of Education

Overall Impression of Quality of Education at this college	STCC	Public College Sample
Excellent	29.4%	29.6%
Good	52.5%	50.8%
Average	15.5%	15.4%
Below Average	1.7%	1.6%
Very Inadequate	.3%	.5%
Blank	.6%	2.2%

Results of the item asking students to rate the overall quality of education at STCC provides more evidence that STCC's students are in general very satisfied with their college experience. Based on a chi-square test (with "Very Inadequate" and "Below Average" combined to increase cell frequencies) no significant difference in the distribution of responses to this item was found either between full and part-time students at STCC or between STCC and the Public College Sample. The overall impression of quality of education was quite high for all groups, with approximately 82% of the students at STCC feeling the quality of their education was above average and over 97% feeling the quality of their education was average or better.

College Services

The ACT Student Opinion Survey measures both usage and level of satisfaction for 17 widely used college services. The tables below show levels of use and satisfaction for the STCC Sample, the Public College Sample, and STCC full and part-time students.

Use of College Services

Services (Percent Who Have Used)	STCC	Public College Sample	STCC Full-time†	STCC Part-time†
Parking facilities and Services	77.8% ***	81.3% ***	92.4%	88.3%
Financial Aid Services	68.8% *	54.0% *	86.8% *	65.5% *
Computer Services	63.2% **	57.3% **	78.9% *	60.0% *
Library/Learning Resources Center Facilities and Services	60.0% *	70.7% *	70.2% ***	60.2% ***
Academic Advising/Course Planning	57.1%	59.0%	68.8% **	57.8% **
Cafeteria/Food Services	38.3% *	50.1% *	46.8% **	33.8% **
College Orientation Program	29.1% *	40.0% *	36.6% *	21.7% *
Vocational Guidance/Career Planning	23.7%	21.7%	27.0%	24.3%
College-Sponsored Tutorial Services	22.4% *	16.2% *	24.6%	24.9%
Personal Counseling Services	11.1% ***	14.2% ***	10.9%	13.6%
College-Sponsored Social Activities	9.4% *	17.5% *	11.6%	6.6%
Job Placement Services	9.1%	8.5%	10.7%	6.0%
Student Employment Services	8.6%	10.7%	11.4% ***	5.6% ***
Recreational/Intramural Programs and Services	7.3% *	13.4% *	8.1%	6.8%
Cultural Programs and Activities	5.3% *	10.5% *	6.5%	3.3%
Veterans Services	4.9%	5.9%	5.6%	3.7%
Credit by examination Program	4.6% **	7.3% **	5.6%	3.8%

*Significant p .001 **Significant (p .01) ***Significant (p .05)

†Because percentages reported for STCC full and Part-time students do not include missing data, they differ from overall STCC percentage.

Comparing the STCC Sample to the Public College Sample again highlights the importance of Financial Aid Services to STCC's student population. A significantly larger proportion of the STCC Sample had used Financial Aid Services than had the Public College Sample (p .001). Similarly a significantly higher proportion of STCC students reported using computer services (p .01) and college sponsored tutorial services (p .001).

Among the 9 services that a significantly (p .001) lower proportion of the students in the STCC Sample used, as compared with the Public College Sample, are three items that may reflect social integration with the school (College Sponsored Social Activities, Recreational/Intramural Programs and Services, and Cultural Programs and Activities). Social integration is often identified as a powerful retention factor, and this finding may indicate that efforts to increase student involvement with extracurricular activities could result in improved retention and enrollment.

The significantly (p .001) lower use of Library/Learning Resources Center Facilities and Services, and the College Orientation Program by students in the STCC Sample as compared to the Public College Sample may be due in large measure to lower use by part-time students. On both of these measures significantly (p .01) fewer part -time students than full-time reported using the service.

For the Library and Learning Resource Center this could be simply a reflection of the part-time student's spending less time at the college and, therefore, having less opportunity to use the facility. Careful attention, however, should be paid to ensuring that the library's facilities are adequately available to meet the needs of part-time students, many of whom tend to be evening and weekend students.

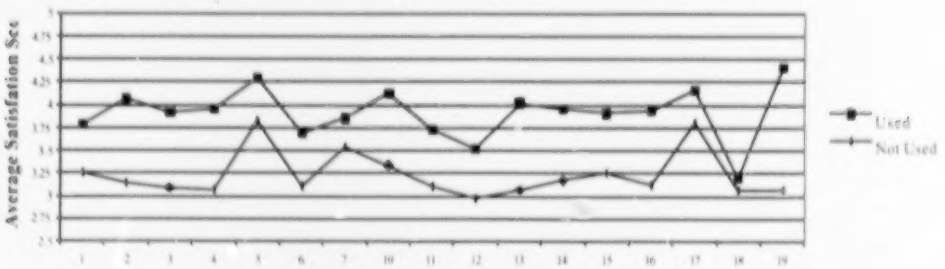
The same caveat can be applied to the availability of the College Orientation Program for part-time (particularly evening and weekend) students. Given that most STCC students are part-time students, it seems imperative that the College Orientation Program be adapted and scheduled to meet these students' needs.

On all seven of the items where part-time students differed significantly from full-time students (see individual items for significance figures), a smaller proportion of part-time students reported using the service than did full-time students. Although some of these services (e.g. cafeteria/food services) may be less needed by part-time students, the consistency with which fewer part-time students report the use of these services indicates a real need to ensure that all services are equally available to both full and part time students. Not ensuring this neglects the largest part of STCC's population, and that could eventually have an adverse impact on enrollment.

Satisfaction With Services

The Reputation Effect

If, as is often asserted, a dissatisfied customer tells many more people than a satisfied customer, it would be easy for a service to acquire a reputation for poorer customer service than it actually provides. This "Reputation Effect" could explain why, for 16 of the 17 services studied, average satisfaction scores for students who reported using a service were significantly higher (p .01) than the average satisfaction scores for students who did not report using the service. This effect is shown in the chart below and should stand as a warning of the harmful effects of even occasionally poor customer service.



Services (Numbers Match Items on Table Below)

Services (Average Satisfaction Scores For)	STCC Students† Service Not Used	STCC Students Service Used	Public College†† Service Used
1. Academic Advising/Course Planning	3.25 *	3.79	3.91 ***
2. Personal Counseling Services	3.15 *	4.06	4.05
3. Vocational Guidance/Career Planning	3.08 *	3.92	3.98
4. Job Placement Services	3.06 *	3.95	3.8
5. Financial Aid Services	3.82 *	4.29	4.01 *
6. Recreational/Intramural Programs and Services	3.10 *	3.69	4.04
7. Library/Learning Resources Center Facilities and Services	3.54 **	3.85	4.09 *
10. College-Sponsored Tutorial Services	3.34 *	4.12	4.13
11. Student Employment Services	3.11 *	3.73	4.09
12. Cafeteria/Food Services	2.97 *	3.52	3.58
13. College-Sponsored Social Activities	3.06 *	4.02	3.96
14. Cultural Programs and Activities	3.17 **	3.95	4.07
15. College Orientation Program	3.26 *	3.91	3.87
16. Credit by examination Program	3.12 *	3.93	3.88
17. Computer Services	3.81 *	4.17	4.13
18. Parking Facilities and Services	3.06	3.2	3.41 **
19. Veterans Services	3.06 *	4.4	4.01

†Asterisks in this column indicate significant differences between students who reported using the service and those who did not.

†† Asterisks in this column indicate significant differences between students who reported using the service and students from the Public College Sample who reported using the service.

*p .001 **p .01 ***p .05

(The services covered in ACT SOS Items 8,9, and 20 are not available at STCC and have been omitted)

The significantly higher average satisfaction score for financial aid, when STCC students who have used the service are compared with students who used the service from the Public College sample, is noteworthy. However, given the extreme importance of financial aid to STCC's enrollment and retention, the significant difference in average satisfaction scores between STCC students who have and have not used the service is troubling.

More troubling is the significant (p .01) difference (shown on the table below) in average satisfaction scores between full and part-time STCC students who had used the service. This was one of only two instances where part-time students who had used a service were significantly less satisfied than full-time students and indicates a real need for the Financial Aid Office to review its procedures to ensure they meet the needs of both full-time and part-time (particularly evening and weekend) students.

The average satisfaction score for part-time students who had used Student Employment Services is also significantly (p .05) lower than average score for full-time students who had used the service. Here again, this indicates a need to review operations and procedures in this area to insure that the needs of all students are met.

The significant differences noted above, between average satisfaction scores for full and part-time students who have used a service, stand out because there is no general pattern of part-time students being less satisfied than full time students. Where no significant differences were found, scores for part-time students who had used the service were higher in six cases and lower in seven. The table below shows the average satisfaction scores on the only four services where significant differences were noted.

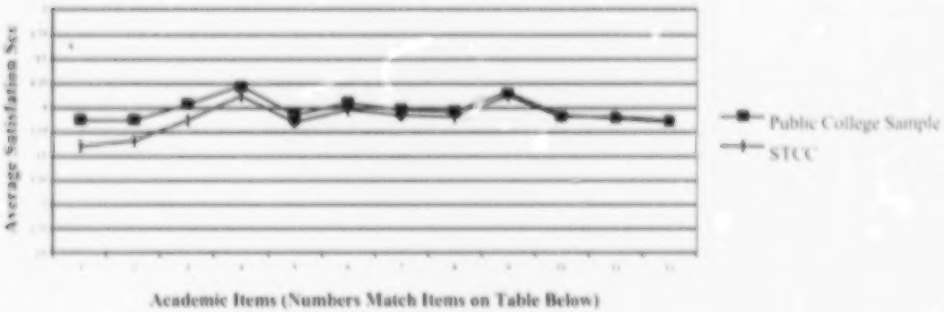
Services	STCC Part-time Students Service Used	STCC Full-time Students Service Used
5. Financial Aid Services	3.82 **	4.29 **
11. Student Employment Services	3.11 ***	3.73 ***
12. Cafeteria/Food Services	2.97 ***	3.52 ***
18. Parking Facilities and Services	3.06 ***	3.2 ***

**p .01
***p .05

Satisfaction with the College Environment

The ACTSOS asks students to respond to 44 items dealing with six different aspects of the college environment (Academic, Admissions, Rules & Policies, Facilities, Registration, and General). For these items, students list their level of satisfaction on a five point scale from "Very Satisfied" to "Very Dissatisfied" and average satisfaction scores are computed for comparison purposes ("Does Not Apply" and blank responses are not scored). The same procedure was used to develop average satisfaction scores for full and part-time students.

Satisfaction with Academic Aspects of the College Environment



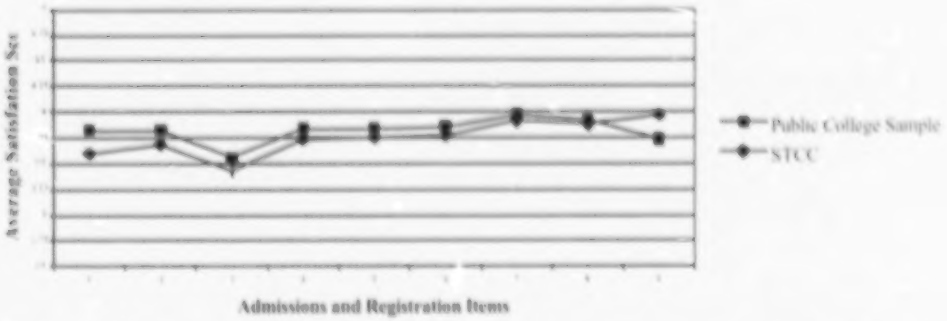
Academic Items (Match with Chart Above)	Rank†	STCC Students	Public College Sample
1. Availability of Your Advisor	31	3.61 *	3.88 *
2. Value of the Information Provided by Your Advisor	27	3.66 *	3.88 *
3. Challenge Offered by Your Program of Study	16	3.87 *	4.04 *
4. Class Size Relative to the Type of Course	2	4.12 *	4.22 *
5. Out-of-class Availability of Your Instructors	17	3.85 ***	3.93 ***
6. Quality of Instruction in Your Major Area of Study	4	3.98 **	4.06 **
7. Course Content in Your Major Area of Study	8	3.92 ***	3.98 ***
8. Testing/Grading System	10	3.91	3.96
9. Attitude of Teaching Staff Towards Students	1	4.12	4.15
10. Preparation You are Receiving for Your Chosen Occupation	9	3.91	3.92
11. Flexibility to Design Your Own Program of Study	13	3.91	3.9
12. Variety of Courses Offered at this 2 year College	15	3.87	3.86

†Rank from highest to lowest average satisfaction score for STCC Students
*p .001 **p .01 ***p .05

No significant differences were found between full and part-time STCC students on this measure. However the average satisfaction scores for STCC students were lower than the scores for the Public College Sample for 11 of 12 items, and the differences were significant (see table above for significance figures) for 8 of these items. The chart and table above list the Academic Items beginning with the item with the greatest difference in average satisfaction scores running to the item with the least difference in scores.

Faculty should be pleased to note that "Faculty Attitude Towards Students" tied with "Class Size Relative to the Type of Course" for having the highest average satisfaction score on this section and was extremely close to the Public College Sample. The average satisfaction scores for "Preparation Received for Chosen Field," "Flexibility to Design Your Own Program of Study," and "Variety of Courses Offered" were virtually identical to those scores for the Public College Sample.

Satisfaction with Admissions and Registration



Admissions and Registration Items	Rank†	STCC Students	Public College Sample
1. Billing and fee payment procedures	33	3.6 *	3.82 *
2. General Registration Procedures	26	3.69 *	3.82 *
3. Availability of the courses you want when you can take them	39	3.43 **	3.56 **
4. General admissions procedures	23	3.74 **	3.84 **
5. Accuracy of college information received before enrolling	22	3.75 *	3.84 *
6. Assistance provided by college staff when you entered	21	3.77 **	3.86 **
7. College catalog/Admissions publications	12	3.91	3.97
8 Academic Calendar for this college (e.g. semester or quarter system	14	3.88	3.92
9. Availability of financial aid information prior to enrolling	5	3.97 *	3.73 *

†Rank from highest to lowest average satisfaction score for STCC Students
*p .001 **p .01 ***p .05

The average satisfaction score for STCC Students significantly (p .001) exceeds that for the Public College Sample on "Availability of Financial Aid Information prior to Enrolling," one of nine items in the Admissions and Registration Sections. Understanding, as has been discussed before, the extreme importance of financial aid to STCC's students this is a very good sign.

Unfortunately, satisfaction with availability of financial aid information prior to enrolling is not uniform. The average satisfaction score for part-time students on this item (3.85) is significantly (p .05) lower than that for full -time students (4.02). This reinforces the need to review the provision of financial aid services to ensure equal treatment for part-time, evening and weekend students.

In this section, part-time and full-time students differed significantly on only one other item. The average satisfaction score for part-time students (3.99) on the "Academic calendar for this college" was significantly (p .05) higher than the score for full-time students (3.81). The meaning, if any, of this difference is doubtful, and this finding warrants no recommendation.

A recommendation is warranted, however, by the finding that for 8 of the 9 items shown on the chart above the average satisfaction score for STCC students fell below that of the Public College Sample, and the difference was significant (see table above for significance figures) for 6 of these 8 items. When looking at the average scores the differences may not seem large even if significant, but the consistency of the responses marks Admissions and Registration as two areas where improvement is needed.

Satisfaction with Rules and Policies

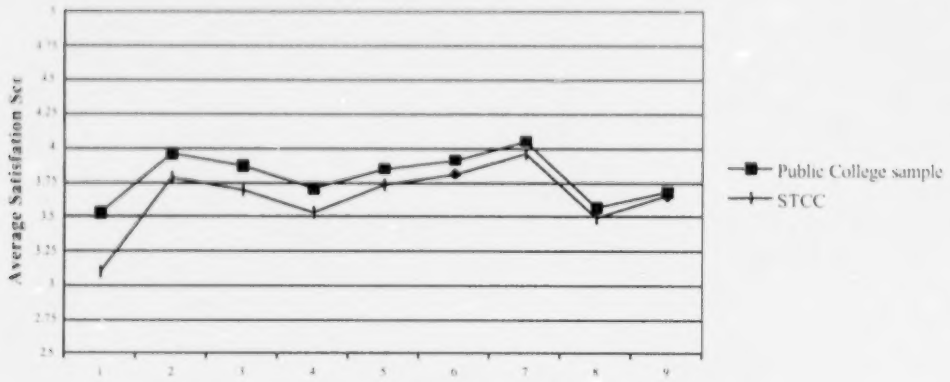
Rules and Policies (Average Satisfaction Scores)	Rank†	STCC Students	Public College Sample
1. Purposes for which student activity fees are used	42	3.32 ***	3.41 ***
2. Personal security/safety at this college	18	3.82 ***	3.9 ***
3. Student voice in college policies	37	3.5	3.51
4. Academic probation and suspension policies	32	3.6	3.6
5. Rules governing student conduct at this college	11	3.91	3.88

†Rank from highest to lowest average satisfaction score for STCC Students
***p .05

Average satisfaction scores for full-time and part-time students did not differ significantly on any of the five items in this section, and scores for the STCC sample fell significantly (p .05) below the Public College Sample on only two of the five items, "Purpose for which student activity fees are used" and "Personal security/safety at this campus."

Since security is a basic human need, "Personal security/safety at this campus," warrants special attention. As can be seen in the table, this item ranked 18th highest out of 44, and is only .09 below the Public College Sample, so the score for this item probably indicates the need for personal security/safety to be included as a priority in planning college services, and the current level of security at least maintained if not improved.

Satisfaction with Facilities



Facilities Items (Numbers Match Items on Table Below)

Facilities Items	Rank†	STCC Students	Public College Sample
1. Athletic facilities	44	3.1 *	3.53 *
2. Classroom facilities	20	3.78 *	3.96 *
3. Study Areas	25	3.69 **	3.87 **
4. Student community center/student union	35	3.53 **	3.7 **
5. Laboratory facilities	24	3.73 *	3.85 *
6. Business-training facilities/equipment (computers, typewriters etc.)	19	3.81 **	3.91 **
7. General condition and appearance of the building and grounds	6	3.96	4.05
8. Industrial arts/shop facilities (wood working, mechanical etc.)	38	3.49	3.57
9. College bookstore	28	3.65 *	3.68 *

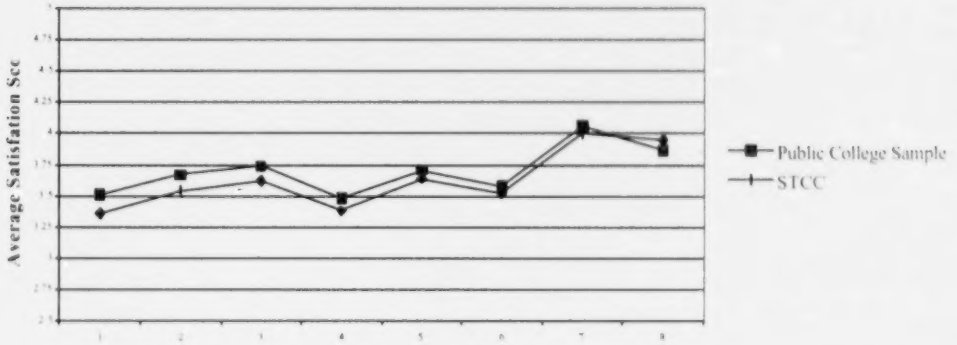
†Rank from highest to lowest average satisfaction score for STCC Students
*p .001 **p .01 ***p .05

Facilities must be considered another area of mild but consistent student dissatisfaction. The average satisfaction scores for the STCC Sample fell below that of the Public College Sample on all 9 items in this area, and significantly (see table below for significance figures) below on 6 of the 9 items.

In attempting to understand this result, it is not possible to estimate the effect of classes in the downtown center and in portable buildings, but since the "General condition and appearance of the buildings and grounds" was the sixth highest item in overall satisfaction scores for STCC, it would seem that each type of facility should be reviewed to determine possible specific deficiencies.

"Business-training facilities/equipment (computers, typewriters, etc.)," was the only facilities item where a significant (p .05) difference was found in the average satisfaction scores for full-time (average score 3.85) and part time (average score 3.68) students. Even though the bulk of part-time students are day students, evening and weekend students may account for this difference. Accordingly, this may indicate a need to review the facilities and equipment available for business students during those times.

Satisfaction with STCC in General



General items	Rank†	STCC Students	Public College Sample
1. College media (college newspapers, campus radio, etc.)	41	3.36 *	3.51 *
2. Opportunities for personal involvement in college activities	34	3.54 *	3.67 *
3. Attitude of the college nonteaching staff toward students	30	3.62 **	3.74 **
4. Student Government	40	3.38 **	3.48 **
5. Concern for you as an individual	29	3.64 **	3.71 **
6. Opportunities for student employment	36	3.52	3.58
7. This college in general	3	4.01	4.06
8. Racial harmony at this college	7	3.95 **	3.87 **

*p .001 **p .01

This section points to one troubling problem with a straightforward solution. The average satisfaction scores for the STCC Sample on seven of the eight items in this group were lower than the scores for the Public College Sample (significantly

lower on 5 of the times, see the table above for significance figures). Of particular concern in this group, are scores on the items "Attitude of the college nonteaching staff toward the students" and "Concern for you as an individual."

If not improved, staff behaviors that have given rise to the dissatisfaction shown in these items could easily lead to decreased satisfaction with a variety of college services. To avoid this, STCC departments need to increase their emphasis on professionalism and customer service in staff-student interactions. This could also help reduce the "Reputation Effect" suggested by the "Satisfaction with Services" section of this report.

In addition to the racial harmony item -- on which the average satisfaction score for STCC significantly exceeded that for the Public College Sample — the average satisfaction score for STCC on "This college in general" deserves particular attention.

Although somewhat lower than the average satisfaction score on this item for the Public College Sample, the STCC Sample's average satisfaction score for "This college in general" at 4.01 was the third highest of any item. This indicates that, for now, the things which students find satisfactory at STCC outweigh those that they find less satisfactory. A review of the rank scores of College Environment items on the ACT SOS provides insight into the areas that are more and less satisfactory for the students.

Highest 22 Items	Rank	Lowest 21 Items	Rank
Attitude of teaching staff towards students	1	General admissions procedures	23
Class size relative to the type of course	2	Laboratory facilities	24
This college in general	3	Study areas	25
Quality of instruction in your major area of study	4	General registration procedures	26
Availability of financial aid information prior to enrolling	5	Value of the information provided by your advisor	27
General condition and appearance of the building and grounds	6	College bookstore	28
Racial harmony at this college	7	Concern for you as an individual	29
Course content in your major area of study	8	Attitude of the college non-teaching staff toward students	30
Preparation you are receiving for your chosen occupation	9	Availability of your advisor	31
Testing/grading system	10	Academic probation and suspension policies	32
Rules governing student conduct at this college	11	Billing and fee payment procedures	33
College catalog/admissions publications	12	Opportunities for personal involvement in college activities	34
Flexibility to design your own program of study	13	Student community center/student union	35
Academic calendar for this college (e.g. semester or quarter system)	14	Opportunities for student employment	36
Variety of courses offered at this 2-year college	15	Student voice in college policies	37
Challenge offered by your program of study	16	Industrial arts/shop facilities (wood working, mechanical etc.)	38
Out-of-class availability of your instructors	17	Availability of the courses you want when you can take them	39
Personal security/safety at this college	18	Student government	40
Business-training facilities/ equipment (computers, typewriters etc.)	19	College media (college newspapers, campus radio, etc.)	41
Classroom facilities	20	Purposes for which student activity fees are used	42
Assistance provided by college staff when you entered	21	Athletic facilities	43
Accuracy of college information received before enrolling	22		

"Attitude of teaching staff towards students" is the highest ranked item, and all of the items dealing with academic preparation fall in the upper half of the rank distribution. The lower half of the distribution contains many facilities items

(some of which may have already been improved by recently added facilities) and items such as "The attitude of the college nonteaching staff toward the student," which may be improved by increased stress on customer service.

The position of "General admissions procedures," "General registration procedures," and "Availability of the courses you want when you can take them" in the lower half of the rank distribution indicates a continued need to improve these procedures and course scheduling. Also falling in the lower half of the rank distribution are items such as "Opportunities for personal involvement in college activities," "College media," and "Student government." This indicates a need to focus more attention on promoting these kinds of student activities, which by helping to integrate the student with the college can be powerful retention factors.

Findings from the Self-Study Follow-up Survey: Students

Distributed with the ACT SOS, the "Self-Study Follow-up Survey: Students", was a 33 item locally distributed instrument designed to focus more comprehensively on the Library, STCC's advising process, and the students' perceptions of instructional program quality. Since this was not a part of the ACT SOS, no national norms are available for comparison, but a comparison of responses for full and part-time STCC students revealed three significant differences. Two of these three items related to the library (a table detailing the responses to all library questions is included as appendix I.)

How often do you use the library?	Full-time Students*	Part-time Students*
1. Never	17.7%	20.3%
2. Seldom	19.6%	32.2%
3. Sometimes	35.7%	29.7%
4. Often	16.6%	13.4%
5. Quite Often	10.5%	4.5%

p .01

The library resources available at this campus are:	Full-time Students*	Part-time Students*
1. Totally inadequate	6.2%	6.1%
2. Inadequate	14.3%	5.5%
3. Neutral	28.3%	43.3%
4. Adequate	40.2%	37.8%
5. Totally Adequate	10.9%	7.3%

p .01

The table above shows that, in response to the question "How often do you use the library?" part-time students are much more likely than full-time students to respond "Seldom" or "Never." This may be due to a number of factors. For example, if part-time students are using other facilities for library work, that could explain both the lower frequency of library use and the higher frequency of neutral responses on the item dealing with adequacy of library resources.

Whatever the explanation, the immediate response to this finding should be a review of library operations to insure that the facilities are equally available to part-time, evening and weekend students.

Advisement Center and Faculty Advisor Findings

Advisement Center Tables

How Satisfied Were You with:	Dissatisfied and Very Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied and Very Satisfied
The availability of advisors -- Overall	15.3%	33.3%	51.4%
Weekday Students	13.1% *	34.1% *	52.8% *
Night and Weekend Students	22.6% *	29.8% *	47.6% *
The accuracy of the guidance provided by your advisor	24.6%	52.3%	23.1%
Weekday Students	21.8% **	57.3% **	20.9% **
Night and Weekend Students	33% **	37.6% **	29.4% **
The material you were given	12.8%	30.3%	56.9%
The staff's courtesy and professionalism	8.2%	28.3%	63.5%

*p .001 **p .01 ***p .05

	No	Yes
Are Advisement Center hours convenient?	25.8%	74.2%
Weekday Students	21.6% *	78.4% *
Night and Weekend Students	37.2% *	62.8% *
Do you know who your division advisor is?	57.9%	42.1%

*p .001

Faculty Advisor Tables

How Satisfied Were You with:	Dissatisfied and Very Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied and Very Satisfied
The availability of your faculty advisor	12.4%	36.9%	50.6%
Weekday Students	9.9% *	37.6% *	52.4% *
Night and Weekend Students	20.3% *	33.7% *	46.1% *
The accuracy of the guidance provided by your faculty advisor	14%	38%	48%
Weekday Students	11.7% *	38.4% *	49.8% *
Night and Weekend Students	21.3% *	36% *	42.7% *

*p .001

	No	Yes
Were you assigned a faculty advisor?	58%	42%
Do you know who your faculty advisor is?	23.4%	76.6%
Should all students with majors be advised by a faculty member from their major program or department?	9.3%	90.7%

*Responses tabulated only for those identified as having a faculty advisor.

Analysis revealed only one significant difference (p .01) between full and part time students, part-time students were significantly less likely than full-time students to know who their division advisor at the Advising Center is. This loses importance in light of the finding that less than half of either group knew their Advisement Center division advisor.

In order to more clearly explain the results for this group of items, results for weekday students and evening and weekend student groups were compared directly, and items where significant differences were found are shown in the tables above. These results clearly demonstrate that students feel any student with a major should be advised by a faculty member from their major program or department, and that more students were satisfied with the accuracy of the guidance given by faculty advisors.

Also clearly, the availability and accuracy of both Advisement Center Advisors and faculty advisors is less for evening and weekend students. This lessening of services available to weekend and evening students is one of the more persistent trends evident in this report and requires a college-wide effort to establish procedures to ensure that all students have access to convenient, high quality services.

The other trend noticeable in the data on student satisfaction with both the Advisement Center and faculty advisors, is the high percentage of neutral responses. While the level of "Dissatisfied," and "Very Dissatisfied" responses remained moderate (33% at the highest), so did the level of "Satisfied," and "Very Satisfied" responses. This suggests a need for the Advisement Center, Division Directors, and Program Chairs to review procedures for providing advising to find ways of increasing levels of accuracy and customer service.

Majors and Transfer Credit

	Inadequately and Very Inadequately	Neutral	Adequately and Very Adequately
How adequately does STCC define what is meant by a major or an area of concentration	8.8%	37.4%	53.7%

	No	Yes
If you have transferred credit from another institution, were you informed of the amount of credit that would be accepted by STCC	68.2%	31.8%

On the two specific questions listed above, results did not differ significantly between part-time and full-time students or between weekday and evening, weekend other students. The majority of all students felt that STCC defines what is meant by a major or area of concentration at least adequately, and the majority who transferred from another institution were not informed of the amount of credit that would be accepted by STCC.

Instructional Program Quality

How well prepared are STCC Students for:	Poorly and Very Poorly Prepared	Adequately	Very Well Prepared
Transferring to a 4-year college	9.8%	70.5%	19.6%
Entering the work force	7.4%	67.8%	24.8%

	Worse	About the Same	Better
How well does the quality of teaching at STCC compare with that of other colleges*	5.6%	60.3%	34%

Percentages shown are of those who felt able to judge.

As has been seen in other areas, when asked about global student satisfaction with STCC and particularly with instruction, virtually all of the students are at least moderately positive and a substantial number are very positive. This indicates that instruction at STCC along with the schools other positive qualities outweigh the less positive features. This is a positive finding, but it should not lead to complacency. Even such items as preparation to enter the work force, with 92.6% positive responses, have only a modest proportion of responses (24.8%) falling into the highest category. Improvement in these areas is possible.

STCC's most immediate need, however, as shown on the ACTSOS and the local supplement, is for all the departments that provide services to students, (e.g. the Library and Learning Resource Center, the Advisement Center, Admissions and Records, and Financial Aid) to review their practices to ensure that adequate services are available for all students – including those that attend primarily during the evenings and on weekends.

Appendix I Satisfaction with Library Services

How often do you use the library?	STCC Sample
1. Never	18.6%
2. Seldom	24%
3. Sometimes	33.6%
4. Often	15.5%
5. Quite Often	8.3%

How often is the Library Catalog helpful in locating materials:	STCC Sample
1. Never	13.2%
2. Seldom	19.9%
3. Sometimes	29.6%
4. Often	24.3%
5. Always	13%

	Totally Inadequate	Inadequate	Neutral	Adequate	Totally Adequate
The library resources (books etc.) available at this campus are:	6.2%	11.3%	33.4%	39.4%	9.7%
For giving timely access to materials from other libraries, the interlibrary loan service provided by STCC's library is:	2.1%	5.4%	45.3%	38.1%	9.1%
For making its collections easily available, the library's physical facility is:	2.4%	6.3%	36.7%	44.3%	10.2%
The instruction /information I received at the STCC library about the availability and use of information resources was:	3.1%	5.9%	40.4%	37.8%	12.9%

To support you in your studies,	Totally Inadequate	Inadequate	Neutral	Adequate	Totally Adequate
The library's circulation desk service is:	2.3%	5.5%	35.2%	46.1%	10.8%
The library's reference desk service is:	1.7%	4.9%	34%	48.4%	11%
The library's on-line catalog is:	1.8%	3.8%	38.2%	43.3%	12.9%
The library's collection of professional/scholarly journals is:	2.5%	10.3%	39.7%	38.4%	9.2%
The variety of books in the STCC library is:	3.8%	12.5%	32.2%	40%	11.4%
The variety of magazines and journals in the STCC library is:	3.2%	10.7%	36.1%	39.5%	10.5%
The video and audio-visual collection in the STCC library is:	2.6%	11%	44.4%	32.7%	9.3%

Appendix II
Student Opinion Survey 2000: Not Currently Registered Students
Telephone Survey of Not Currently Registered Students
Self-Study Follow-up Survey: Students (Local Supplement to the ACTSOS)

Why did those students go away? Is there something about them or their experience at STCC that makes them different from students who persist? Those are the questions that surveys of not currently registered students hope to answer. And the answer appears to be yes, these students are somewhat different, and yes, there are differences in their experience at STCC.

This reports contains the preliminary analysis of findings that may be important for retention and scheduling issues from two surveys of students who had been registered in Fall 1999 but did not register for Spring 2000 and the Self-Study Follow-up Survey for Students. Another report has been issued, which details findings from the ACT Student Opinion Survey that are relevant to these issues. This report does not repeat similar findings, but instead focuses on differences between the two samples.

The Not Currently Registered Sample

Two samples were drawn from the 3001 students who had attended STCC during the Fall Semester 1999 and who neither graduated nor returned for Spring Semester 2000. First 300 of these students were selected for a telephone survey focused on the student's reason for not returning. Responses were obtained for 112 (37%) of these students. Students who had been placed on academic suspension (310) were removed from the remaining students, and from this pool of 2391 not currently registered students, 1000 were selected to receive a mail survey that largely duplicated the ACT Student Opinion Survey. Predictably, the response rate was low, 168 students or 17%.

Statistical comparison of the respondents to the 3001 students in the pool revealed only one significant difference; more females responded than males. Female students comprised 68% of the respondent group but only 58% of the sample. Bearing the possible effects of this one difference in mind, the results of this survey are considered to reliably represent the not currently registered student population.

Positive Attrition

As discussed in some depth in Retention at STCC: A Delicate Balance (July 1998) student attrition can be divided into three categories: positive, neutral, and negative. Positive attrition is that which occurs when a student accomplishes his/her goal, even if that goal is not the completion of a degree. Several indicator show that a considerable amount of such positive attrition can be found in this group:

- 35% indicated their intention was to take courses toward transfer to another 2 or 4-year school. 19% of the sample and 16 % of the entire group had already enrolled at UTPA at the time of the study.

- 41% of the respondents reported having achieved their goal at STCC
- 10% of the respondents reported attending STCC for self-improvement or with no goal in mind.

Once this positive attrition is accounted for, however, there still exists a substantial body of students who have experienced neutral or negative attrition and who can represent an important resource for STCC. To understand steps that might be useful in attempting to retain these students, one must first look at how these students and their experience differ from continuing students at STCC.

Student Differences
(Based on findings from the ACT Student Opinion Survey)

- More are married: 36% as compared to 24% for continuing students
- More have children: 45% have one or more child as compared to 33% for continuing students
- Fewer entered directly from high school: 20% compared to 37%
- More transferred from a 2 or 4 year college/university: 31% compared to 22%
- More were doing "Other" just prior to enrolling at STCC: 23% compared to 13%. This may reflect the larger female component, who may be returning to school after a period as a homemaker (future studies will address this possibility).
- More are older: the chart below shows the age differences

Age Group	Not Registered Students	Continuing Students
18 to 20	22%	42%
21 to 25	43%	31%
28 to 29	14%	11%
30 to 39	14%	11%
40 to 61	7%	4%
62 and over	Less than 1%	Less than 1%

Different Experiences

- More are night students: 42% compared to 20% for continuing students
- They use fewer services: tabulating responses that indicated use of STCC's various services reveals that the non-returning students used 1.4 services per student compared to 4.6 services used per continuing student, over 3 times as many
- Ability to work while attending school was a more important factor in choosing STCC: 55% versus 39% for continuing students
- Type of courses offered was more important: 65% versus 52%
- They were less satisfied with college sponsored tutorial services: 59% satisfied or very satisfied as compared to 70% for continuing students.

- They were less satisfied with student employment services: 13% satisfied or very satisfied versus 50% for continuing students
- They were less satisfied with college sponsored social activities: 45% satisfied or very satisfied versus 63% for continuing students
- They were less satisfied with STCC's services overall: for 8 of the 13 other services listed on the survey, fewer not currently enrolled students were satisfied or very satisfied.
- They were less satisfied with many of the 41 items concerning "College Environment" the following table lists some of the more salient of these

Item	Satisfied and Very Satisfied	
	Not currently enrolled students	Currently enrolled students
The out-of-class availability of their instructors	56%	64%
The attitude of teaching staff toward students	72%	80%
The variety of courses offered	62%	72%
The availability of financial aid information prior to enrolling	55%	69%
Business training facilities/equipment	46%	54%
General registration procedures	59%	66%
Availability of courses you want to take at the times you can take them	51%	57%
Concern for you as an individual	48%	57%
Opportunities for student employment	29%	40%
Library resources at their most frequently attended campus	50%	70%
Availability of advisors at the advising center	43%	55%
Guidance provided by the advisor at the advisement center	42%	57%

Neutral Attrition

What M.S. Sheldon called neutral attrition occurs because of non-institutional conflicts such as family commitments or job requirements. Evidence from the two surveys of Not currently enrolled students indicates that this form of attrition accounts for the loss of many students.

- Conflicts with work schedule were cited as a very important factor for deciding not to return to STCC by 33% of the students in the phone survey and 30% of the students in the mail survey
- Inability to get "the right classes when I needed them" was cited as a very important factor by 11% of the phone survey respondents and 24% of the mail

survey respondents another 16% of the mail respondents cited inability to get needed classes at the cite they needed them as a very important factor

- Inability to get the classes "I wanted/needed" was listed as a very important factor by 15% of the phone survey respondents and 23% of the mail survey respondents
- Inability to get enough financial aid was listed as a very important factor by 14% of the mail survey respondents and 20% of the mail survey respondents

Implications

These older students represent not "neutral attrition" but a lost resource for STCC in terms of its student population. STCC can take a few steps to retain these students and attract more of their kind.

- Develop integrated evening schedules. Programs should be analyzed to find any that can be delivered entirely during the evening hours. A complete evening schedule for the whole program should be laid out in advance, so that evening students can plan their schedules over four or even more semesters. Such programs could be marketed specifically to evening students

- STCC must offer the same number and quality of services to both day and night student populations. The availability of night services should be advertised

- Opportunities for nighttime student employment should be expanded

- Campus activities geared to older, night students should be developed to encourage the student's integration with STCC

- The feeling of concern for the student as a person must be fostered. As was pointed out in Retention at STCC: a Delicate Balance, STCC's students thrive on personal attention.

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